

FSA Board agrees to strengthen allergy information for consumers

The FSA Board agreed at their meeting on Wednesday 13th December that they would like to see written allergen information be mandated in the non-prepacked sector and will be writing to Ministers to discuss the Board's view.

In the meantime, the FSA will work to develop strong guidance for food businesses on how to provide written allergen information to help drive up compliance and make it easier for people with a food allergy, intolerance and coeliac disease to protect themselves when eating out.

In addition to providing written information, the Board also acknowledged that there should be an expectation for a verbal conversation to take place between customers and food business staff, to ensure an added layer of protection for consumers.

Commenting on the Board's position, Professor Susan Jebb, Chair on the FSA said:

"At the FSA we are committed to making lives better for the 2 million people who have a food allergy, food intolerance or coeliac disease. In today's discussions, it was clear that the Board feel that we should set an expectation that food businesses like coffee shops and restaurants provide allergen information in writing as well as having a conversation."

"The Board also considers that to maximise the likelihood of this happening, written information should be a legal requirement, rather than just guidance. I will write to Ministers in England and Wales, the Permanent Secretary in Northern Ireland and contact my counterpart at Food Standards Scotland to discuss the Board's position as the Board would like to see them take this forward on a four-country basis.

"Meanwhile I want us to do all we can in the FSA to provide guidance and support to business so that we can quickly start to make improvements that will be helpful for people with food hypersensitivities when they are eating out.

"I would also like to thank the Carey family for all their work in highlighting the importance of this issue since their son Owen died tragically after unwittingly eating food he was allergic to in 2017."